

# Let Them Eat Gateau au Chocolat

In an embarrassing moment of weakness, I pressed my nose against the display window in awe of the puffy, flaky, chocolaty, fruity-filled delights. Each individual petite grandiose calorie-laden perfection of sweet goodness had me awe-struck. The goods were delicately placed in a box and ribbon-wrapped awaiting to tantalize some lucky dinner guest. Suddenly I found myself saying *"Qu'ils mangent de la Gâteau au Chocolat."*



Delightful French pastries in Alsatian pâtisserie

*"Let them eat cake"* is the traditional translation of the French phrase *"Qu'ils mangent de la brioche"*, supposedly spoken by Marie Antoinette when she learned that the peasants had no bread. The history of cake dates back to ancient times and the first cakes were very different from today, they were

more like bread or what we know today as *Kugelhopf* (a yeasty cake).

During those days, cake or Brioche as it was called, was sweetened with honey, nuts and dried fruits were often added. For those times those ingredients were scarce and very expensive which meant making brioche was even more out of the reach for peasants than bread. Thank goodness those days are gone and we can rejoice knowing that with a few simple ingredients, we can make *Gateau au Chocolat*.



Kugelhopf, a raisin-filled yeast bread popular in the Alsace region of France.

Ever since vacationing in and around the Alsace region of France, I have a new appreciation for the chocolaty gooey goodness. While walking around French towns and villages, one can't help but gaze into the windows of a *pâtisserie*, confectioners or chocolatiers. The lovely little goodies are calling me in, so I hear the request and follow. Before you know it, I'm walking out of the shop with an array of hand-crafted drool-worthy French pastries. Lavish indeed, but so worth it.

I wonder how many years of intense training I'd need to partially master baking and decorating those sweet squares of perfection let alone a *Gateau au Chocolat*. Probably a lifetime, but *au contraire* (the opposite). There is something magical about what a little gourmet chocolate, French butter, and a few eggs can do.

I could attempt to make the treats myself, but then I'd have no reason to travel to Alsace. Therefore, I'll let the experts carry on baking more ultimate French pastries.





French Gateau au Chocolat from Alsatian pâtisserie

A molten cake oozing with warm chocolate. A rich Gateau au Chocolat that melts in your mouth. A chocolate layer cake smothered with icing. I have no shame. I'm going to spend the holidays baking, buying, and eating rich deserts.

I don't feel guilty indulging in a slice or two of chocolate heaven, because, if chocolate comes from cocoa beans, and all beans are a vegetable, then eating Gateau au Chocolat is like eating a salad ☐